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SUBJECT: FINNISH ENVIRONMENT MINISTER WELCOMES U.S. CLIMATE  
INITIATIVE

REF: STATE 75287

[1](#)1. (SBU) On June 20, Ambassador Ware briefed Finnish Environment Minister Paula Lehtomaki on the President's new initiative for developing a post-2012 climate change framework by the end of 2008. While appreciative of the U.S. proposal, Lehtomaki continued to hold to the EU's focus on binding international commitments in any post-Kyoto solution. Nonetheless, Lehtomaki said Finland was encouraged by the proposal and by U.S. leadership in building international commitment to addressing climate change, particularly from China and India. Citing climate change as one of the key priorities of the new Finnish government, Lehtomaki commented on the importance of the U.S. and EU working with other international partners within the established UN climate process, rather than simply blazing what she termed "lonely independent paths."

[1](#)2. (SBU) Reflecting her previous position as Minister of Foreign Trade and Development, Lehtomaki stressed that developing countries have a strong expectation that developed countries should shoulder the cost of climate change. Lehtomaki also remarked on the importance of using technology to address climate change, including carbon capture and storage; however, she stated that a strong global cap and trade system is needed to generate adequate investment for technological solutions.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Lehtomaki remarked positively on the U.S.-EU High Level Dialogue on Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development (HLD) that took place last fall in Helsinki. She briefly shared the difficulty Finland faced in convincing the EU Commission to put forward a balanced agenda for the HLD. Lehtomaki reiterated that Finland views the HLD as an important stepping stone that led to further engagement between the U.S. and the international community on climate change issues.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Comment: A rising star in Finnish politics, Lehtomaki continues to tow the EU line on climate change; however, the Finns tend to be pragmatic consensus builders who are eager to develop a strong international climate change framework. As such, we can likely count on Finland to be cooperative and helpful as we work with the EU on climate change issues as demonstrated during the HLD. End comment.  
WARE